



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE MORAL ARGUMENT OF THEISM

GEORGE A. BARROW

MILFORD, MASS.

Construction rather than destruction is, in its time and place, a good motto, but to attempt a reconstruction without first clearing the ground is likely to make the resulting building unstable. In the last quarter-century we have been attacking one by one the received views in theology, and now we are ready for constructive work, but unfortunately, as many students know who are in theological seminaries, even some marked as "liberal," there is little fundamental criticism of the general basis of theism. Theology has made use of the philosophical progress, but has made comparatively little advance in its own field. So we find the traditional arguments for God's existence repeated in only very slightly modified form. It is in the attempt to bring home to us the necessity for a thorough-going criticism that this examination of one of the traditional arguments for God's existence has been undertaken.

It is well, to begin with, to restate the "moral argument" from a non-theistic point of view, to see what it means when put in words that do not imply its results. If the existence of morality in the world proves the existence of God, it is because morality involves the fundamental categories of being. If it does involve them, it is at least as fundamental a part of real being as the non-moral or physical world. We could rest here, if the two were two separate compartments of reality, each contributing its part. Instead, they are closely interrelated. What we do as moral beings affects physical nature, at the least moves our bodies; and physical nature, as represented by our bodies, aids or hinders our moral actions. If, then, morality involves as much of real being as does physical existence, or even more than as much, and if that real being is, as theism declares, one, then the two are in harmony, and the morality is a component part of the same world with the physical life. This view requires that physical

life shall not, in the last analysis, make morality impossible. That is the same as saying that the moral will shall have power to exist in the physical world. This statement of the problem shows it to be even more important than as a merely additional proof of the existence of God. We have to ask whether the fact and nature of morality prove that existence must be such that life is explainable only by One who is self-existent good, the guarantor of the power of morality in physical life.

We have, in treating first the nature of morality, to make somewhat clearer the idea of the morally good, and to inquire whether it involves power over the physical. For our purpose it is enough to point out that it is a human concept, that it involves the conscious will, that it is a social concept, and that it is finite, yet not necessarily involving physical powers.

In the first place, it originates with man. The conception of good comes to us from the life of man. We do apply the terms good and bad to physical events, but only when those events affect man. To call an earthquake evil, simply because it caused loss to man, when it may be the necessary outcome of conditions and the necessary preliminary to further events, is correct only if the good of the universe is coincident with the good of man. To assume that it is so, is to beg the question. All that is essential in the idea of good is that it take account in some way of man's needs. Historically, the moral ideas have originated only among men. Even the highest animals below man seem to have no idea of it. Also good implies the existence of purpose and knowledge of an end. Nowhere in the universe known to us, outside of man, do we find anything but causal sequences. Animals seem not to have reflective actions. But even if they have, it would but extend morality to them, not to inanimate nature. What is good, then, if it is to be existent, must be found in that part of the world where man exists. If the concept then proves to include all existence, all is well, but it must be shown to be thus all-inclusive. The good, starting from the ideas of man's duty and best aim in life, can hardly be taken to imply good in everything. A concept cannot rise higher than its source. Of the things which man possesses in common with all existence, the idea derived from his experience will be valid for all, but in

those things which are peculiar to man the concepts must be limited by the limited field from which they are derived. Good, as a concept, does not include inanimate nature, so yields no inference as to any relation to it.

In the second place, the concept is one of will. If will ceases to exist, then the good must cease to exist. This brings to light the fact that the good must inhere in a will. We have too long dissociated the process and the result. The only thing that gives any concrete good its existence is that it is the object of some conscious will. It is because we must will something that the question, what is best to will, arises. If there is no will, there is no question, and no idea of good. In the world, then, where there is no conscious will, and only as such is the physical world known to us, there can be no self-existent good. What relation there is, is for metaphysics to say; it is not a deduction from the nature of good. The nature of the concept of good as involving conscious will also yields us no inference as to any power over non-conscious nature.

Thirdly, it is a social concept. To the possible objection that our argument about the origin of the idea of good with man has seeming validity only because of its confusion of the historical and genetic with the logical, we reply that the two cannot be entirely separated. Of course we cannot take the earliest forms of morality and call them typical, but neither can we take the moral ideals to concern simply the individual, when they have their principal significance only in the larger world where the individual must sink his private good for the good of the whole. The formal concept of the self-existent good must be a social concept. "Good for something" must tag every act of the human individual. It is only society which can enshrine a larger vision. But the will of society is even more held down to earth than the will of the individual. Unless we accept a theory of thought-transference, and this is hardly inherent in any ethical system, the social will must be mediated in terms of time and space. The good-in-itself, depending on the existence of some will, and effective only through a social will, can hardly rise and dominate those very laws of time, space, and causality in the physical world by which alone it can have being. To argue that it does, requires

the assumption that the whole universe is essentially moral. Again we are moving in a circle, and begging the question. The social nature of the idea of good, as well as the two former aspects, can yield no encouragement in an attempt to prove power over physical nature.

In the fourth place, morality is a finite idea. On the purely formal side, the good is not that which exists, but that which ought to exist. If placed in the world of time, it must lie in the future. Future finite existence depends for man on his will and purpose. Even the absolute good, then, to exist finitely, must depend on the creative will, and this, as we have seen, does not help the argument to prove power in the physical realm, and the existence of God. But of course, we are answered, it is eternal and infinite existence that the self-existent good possesses, and this is outside the world of time. Undoubtedly the fact that man seeks, requires that in the eternal world there shall exist the goal sought, whether attained or not. But here our objectors, if they wish their distinction to bear on our problem, miss the meaning of "exist in the world of eternity." Anything, we grant, which is necessarily implied in any existent thing, exists in the infinite timeless realm. But it exists there only because, logically, it first has also its foot in the world of our experience. Our dreams are facts of that larger universe, but only because they are somebody's dreams. In the same way the final goal of our endeavors has being, and being in itself,—it exists for nothing but itself,—but it has that kind of existence only because as such it is the goal of an existent finite will. Its timeless existence depending on its finiteness, it cannot cut loose and claim independence. There is, then, no help here toward any necessary infinite existence.

In the fifth place, moral good does not necessarily involve physical nature. It is perfectly possible to conceive that the good for man is not the good for the rest of the universe. This is really the underlying idea of a good deal of popular religion in all ages. Man must subdue the hostile world; man must endure a pilgrimage in the world with such help as God gives, in order to be finally taken from the world,—these ideas by no means assume that the physical universe is moral. They imply the opposite,

that the good for man is what the world by itself would never bring, that any power of good affects the world only by destroying it. The theologians of all ages have tried to argue away this practical dualism, but their success, so far as they have succeeded, is due to their idea of God's omnipotence. They undoubtedly, in many cases, allow evil as self-existent, for only a few would go the length of asserting that God created evil. We cannot, as did many of the saints of old, personify the world, for personification implies will, and it is just the absence of will that separates the rest of the world from man. Yet we can postulate an end, not willed, though foreseeable by man, in the physical world. All that makes to this end may be called physically good. Of course, except for man, there can be no physical evil in this sense, for progress, if man does not interrupt, is certain and sure to the impending outcome. This end may be anything, —for example, the complete disintegration of all solar and stellar systems into planetary dust, and even the scattering of this in infinite space so far that its finite energy would be exhausted before new systems could be formed. In such a hypothetical case the moral demands of man certainly are neglected. It would only be by postulating some other world, heaven or spirit realm, that moral endeavor, in face of the coming extinction of man, could have place or meaning. The good which man seeks now would still be a fact in the non-temporal world, but it would have no meaning in the world of time. The good or tendency of the universe, moving inevitably to its end, would be opposed to the demands of the self-existent good of man. There is nothing in the conception of good which can overcome this dualism. We may not accept it as final, but our reasons must be based on confidence in the ultimate power of reason in the universe, or on some conception of divine omnipotence. Monism may be held on other grounds, but as a deduction from the concept of goodness it is not valid. There is nothing inherent in goodness which insures its victory over the physical world.

Although the nature of morality does not insure its victory, and so prove God's existence, there is still the fact of its existence. Morality is not a physical concept, we say; is not, then, the good as existent, even though not physical, an argument

for the existence of the Omnipotent? This is the more usual form of the problem. If by it we mean to ask whether by a survey of our experience we can say that the world appears to include or promise more good than evil, and that this, since nature is by herself non-moral, requires the supposition of some personal power which makes this balance, we can foresee defeat at the outset. To hope to attain knowledge of such a power, even if it is not thought of as omnipotent, implies a close connection between goodness and finite existence, and falls into the same danger as do the arguments from the formal concept which we have just considered. To hope to prove the existence of a superhuman being by a survey of objective existence, assumes that the easiest approach to reality is through the judgment on facts. Let us suppose that the situation is more clear than it is,—that the world plainly lends itself to moral actions. The just and upright man always receives a due reward, and all the purposive actions of man, when moral, attain their ends as surely as the physical laws are now seen to work. The very inevitableness of such a situation might lead us to postulate that, instead of freedom and moral action, men were but automata. Or, if not, that after all, true existence lay in seeing the right path, and that sin was ignorance, and morality simply common-sense in acting according to our best light. Man, then, making use of the moral laws as he does now of the physical, would no more need the assumption of a *deus ex machina* in the moral world than he does at present in the physical. The very laws which we seek to prove as showing the growing morality of existence may be, if we take them only objectively, as mechanical and non-personal as the fact that while one man cannot build a pyramid, thousands can; showing, indeed, co-operation to be wise, but proving nothing as to the reason why such co-operation is so fit. To hope to attain from a survey of the objective world of human morals to a knowledge of ultimate existence is as hopeless as to dream of finding the nature of matter from laboratory experiments, and for the same reason. Unless a thing is objectively given, argument from those things which are given must be mere hypotheses so long as objective existence alone is conceived. We say, the fact that man can be more or less moral in the world

proves that there are forces in the world working for morality. This statement is true within the limits of its terms,—in the finite world there are moral forces,—but we knew that in the beginning, for we knew men to be moral. As to any superhuman power, we have learned nothing. And as to the ultimate constitution of the universe we know less still. Looking only at the objective side, it seems more likely that man's systems of morality from the lowest to the highest will be shown to be biological, than that the biological, and still less the chemical and physical, laws will turn out to be deducible from the moral. Even perfection in the objective world, then, would not prove God's existence by the existence of morality. As to the imperfection which is the crux of our actual moral life, it is just the powerlessness of man before a nature which often seems careless of his moral needs that forms for us the problem of evil. Certainly imperfection cannot prove God's existence. The very fact of imperfection argues against God's existence, and even if the world were perfect, it would not need personality, even that of God, to explain it. Whether the world, then, is perfect or imperfect, it cannot lead us to God.

Leaving the question whether the world's goodness or badness requires a God to explain it, we may go further and approach the main question. Owing to the incomplete view which man has, he may not be able to prove God's existence from objective morality, and yet the bare existence of the idea of morality, the fact that man can and does make moral judgments, requires, we might conclude, that there be in control of the universe some power which must be called moral. Here we should carefully distinguish between two things, the moral will and the moral judgment. Closely as they may be interlocked, and in practice they are inextricable, they involve two distinct ideas. We may perhaps say that the moral judgment decides what is moral, what the content of our moral code shall be, while the will in the first place determines whether or not there shall be a moral judgment, and, after it is made, whether it shall be followed or not. Psychologically we may be able to resolve the last act, moral or immoral, into the first determination to make or to avoid a decision, but logically these are distinct. Will makes ideals actual, but in

our life the constant falling short of the ideal proves there can be an ideal which does not become actual. Likewise we may decide what is right, and then not do it. Whether this becomes our will through lack of attention or not, the process cannot obscure the fact that we made a judgment which it did not suit us to carry out. Yet, some would say, the will to make such a judgment is the fundamental thing, so we come back to will in any case. It must be admitted that we are in this discussion using "will" in a somewhat vague sense. Will is not simple, and is not separated from intelligence so as to be absent even from judgments of truth. This is due, however, to the broad scope of the word "will," not to the identity of the processes. When I will to walk, there may be something in common with the will to classify the trees I pass, but the two wills, though both involving somewhat similar nerve action, result differently. The result of one remains, for the most part, if no word is spoken, with the brain or at least the nerve centres, while the other has most of its effect outside those nerve centres. This difference of result justifies us in a difference of classification. We therefore distinguish between the will to do and the will to think. Under this last falls the moral judgment. When we analyze our attitude towards the moral code, we see that it is relatively exterior. The will to decide is rather a will to recognize. The attempts to deduce our concrete moral criteria from the *a priori* idea of right inevitably mix with the deduction a consciousness of what mankind judges to be right. When we ask ourselves whether we ought to do a given thing, and are in doubt, the hesitation is not, in general, as to the agreement of this act with the ultimate basis of life, but as to its agreement with some pre-established moral standard, whether our own or the world's. Moralists and philosophers may wish this were otherwise, but even they do not stop to deduce their judgment *a priori* before they come to a decision as to the right in a given crisis. The moral judgment, therefore, as we find it among men, is a judgment of the agreement or disagreement of a contemplated act with some standard of action. To say whether the existence of moral ideas proves the existence of God, we must divide the inquiry, and take first the question of the existence of the moral judgment, and second the fact of the moral will.

In one sense we are beginning backward, for the will to judge is only one phase of conscious will, and God's existence, if provable from the fact of will in general, is of course equally shown in the moral will. Yet our smaller problem still has a place. Even if God is known to exist because of man's possessing a will, there would still remain the question whether the moral judgment is an essential part of God's life. Not even the answer to this is what we are seeking, but only whether the good is so essential that, whatever other manifestation of will there may be, it requires God's existence. In other words, is morality fundamental or derived? Analyzing our attitude when we judge a thing to be right, we find that it is somewhat the same as willing to find the truth about anything. We may judge the righteousness of another's act as well as of our own act, and in that case no will of ours is involved except the will to judge. Taking this case, we say that the act was right,—right because it agrees with our view of morality, either codal, or in general as befitting a man, or as serving God. The judgment is one of agreement or disagreement. When we come to ourselves, there is no essential difference. The view of conscience which makes it, so far as the possessor goes, instinctive, is the very view which makes its proof of God impossible. As instinctive, man cannot tell its origin except in objective terms, and these cannot be valid beyond the limits of experience. Any God deducible from the existence of an instinct may very well be a God limited to humanity, and this is not what we mean. Conscience, or the feeling of duty as exerting a power over the individual, arises from the will of man to decide. He wills to lay out for himself a plan of action, and when it is laid out, because it is a plan for his action, it exerts influence upon him. This is not confined to moral judgment. The disinclination of men to desert their political party arises because of the power over them of that plan of action which they either inherited or formerly thought out. Any plan, willed to be regarded as a possible act of ours, has power over us. This is the explanation of many of the imitative crimes. The account in the daily paper gives rise to the idea that this man could do it too, and finally he does it. All that we have to consider, then, is whether the will to judge right and wrong is proof of God's

existence. Here the peculiar nature of the moral judgment must be taken into account. It is not a question of means to an end, but of logical disagreement. How we shall accomplish the desired moral result we must plan, but that is not a moral question. If it is right for me to attend a certain meeting, and I have plenty of time, whether I walk or ride is not involved in the decision that I ought to attend, however much walking may be right to improve health. We can hardly say that man's ability to discriminate proves a power beyond man, for the animals have in many ways, especially where the senses are concerned, a finer sense of discrimination than we possess. Nor can the abstract nature of the judgment prove it, for man may abstract as much as he pleases, and while his abstractions may be valid, they prove nothing more than his ability to include in one whole more of the world than do the lower animals. That they prove that there is a being who can include more still is not a logical deduction. But—we hear—it is not the fact that man can call a thing right and wrong when he has a code of morality already fashioned that matters; it is the existence of that code that is crucial. Historically, we can hardly call this true. The moral codes have arisen through two factors, the instincts—family, self-preservation, and desires for social life—and reflection on the experience as individuals in the family and race. What is right is by the common run of men taken pre-eminently to mean what experience shows to be best. The idea of a revealed code has weakened this somewhat, but even here we really conceive that God tells us what is best. Apart from the question of man's ability not to follow the code to which he owes allegiance, a moral code seems hardly different from any other. The code of modern hygiene arises from similar instincts and reflection upon them. If a man wills to plan for himself what is most healthy, he tends, unless some stronger motive intervenes, to follow that plan. To this the dietetic cranks and others bear witness. As far as abstraction goes, the abstractions of mathematics are far more subtle than those of morality, yet I do not know of any proof of God's existence based on man's ability to develop mathematics.

There may perhaps be a last objection on this point, that what

counts is man's making a judgment on such things as his actions at all. It is true that this is peculiar to man, yet it may very well have arisen because of the opposition of nature. Man finds that his own natural desires followed out will not allow him to live in this world. Lack of self-control in the plenty of summer means, to the inhabitant of any but the tropics, starvation in the barrenness of winter; so self-control becomes imperative if he is to live. It is here the opposition of his instincts to natural laws that forces him to at least one step in morality. This would not prove the existence of a moral being having power over physical nature, but only man's bowing to physical laws. So of those acts which would destroy the family or the tribe. Even in the lower animals we find some approximation to this. Man is so made that, for the family life to continue, he must yield his natural inclination of self-betterment to those laws which govern community life anywhere in nature. This is more true of the ants or bees than it is of man. It is man's ability to disobey those laws which really distinguishes him from the bees and ants. Man must make a judgment as to the agreement of his contemplated acts with those natural laws under which he lives. That he makes the abstract judgment that he does marks him off from the lower animals, but that he make some kind of moral judgment is forced on him as a finite being living a physical life. The fact, therefore, of the moral judgment proves not to involve or require the existence of an infinite or superhuman personality.

The element in the nature of man which makes by far the greater part of his power over nature is his will. It is this which leads to the control of nature to his own ends. However much in the first place his nervous structure may have given him the advantage over other living things, it is his ability to plan, and to bring all his powers to one end, that makes him indifferent to slight disturbing sensations, such as often lead a dog, for instance, to drop his present intention. It is in the will, then, that we may expect to find the necessity for a God. If the argument from the existence of morality has any validity, the fact of the will to do right must point the way to God. If, however, the moral will is not essentially different from any other will,

the only thing that matters is the existence of will in any form, and we are no longer concerned with morality simply. It is only if the moral will adds something to the argument from will in general that we are at present interested. In one sense, of course, any will is, or ought to be, moral. Whatever we do, if we accept a certain idea of right, should be directed to perfecting ourselves. Even in amusement there is the duty to refresh ourselves as much as possible in order to fit ourselves better to take up our serious work. Here everything is either moral or immoral. But this is an ideal which no one has reached. We distinguish, ordinarily, those purposes which are and those which are not moral. There are certain things which it is neither our duty to do nor our duty not to do. The actions have no moral significance. It may be my duty to walk a mile to regain health, or it may be just a matter of pleasure whether I take the walk or not. In one case, so far as my consciousness is concerned, I do wrong to ride. In the latter case, I cannot do wrong, whatever my decision may be. When we ask ourselves whether there is any fundamental difference between the purpose in the two cases, we see that the difference lies in the motive. Duty, as we have seen, is the appeal of the result of my judgment that a certain contemplated act is in accordance with a certain standard. The purpose to walk to enjoy myself is the result of a judgment, perhaps in the background of consciousness, that such action conforms to the standard of ideas of enjoyment. In both cases the act follows because it is the outcome of a previous will to be moral or to have pleasure. If there is any fundamental difference, therefore, it lies in this difference of the judgment of pleasure and of right. We cannot rightly say that one of these invokes an inner and the other an exterior standard, for the moral standard by being accepted becomes internal, and that standard may, as in certain forms of hedonism, be conceived as identical with the will to enjoy ourselves. This fact, that for hedonism and for perfectionism all will becomes moral, shows that there is not any uncrossable gulf. We have, then, two possible alternatives, either all will is moral or all will is, or can be, moral when at its purest. In the first case, to infer God's existence from the phenomena of will implies the power of all will

over nature,—God exists because the will to believe this has power, which may be taken as a very crude statement of a certain form of pragmatism; in the second case, it assumes that will, when pure, is the true manifestation of the inner being of the universe. In the first case, the moral element cannot be analyzed out, for the will is taken as a whole, and nowhere has there existed the ideal of every purpose being moral. We must take will as we find it, mixed of many elements. The will to believe in God, moreover, cannot be put to a universal objective test, and only such would prove it of universal validity. It may have power, as William James in his idea of pluralism implies, only in a limited sphere. It is in this case no argument for Christian theism. By the word "God" we do not mean merely a power larger than the individual, though that is justifiable from the usage of lower religions, but we mean an absolute, or, better, an infinite unlimited power. Hence any argument which has only conditioned application does not apply to this idea of God. Therefore, since either morality cannot be used as a separate element in will, or, if it is, must be limited in application, the first alternative does not help us to prove God's existence.

The other alternative, that will is the true form of being, is not based on a narrower view of its moral character, but on its general character. If God is personal, it might be that even then he is not moral, or, putting it in another way, the basis of his decisions may be entirely subjective. It might be possible to make the idea of morality absorb this subjective element, but we have seen that, as we use the concept, it is objective, and depends on a conscious judgment of agreement with a (possibly self-made) standard. If the divine consciousness works more like our instinctive or unhesitating decisions, and this is conceivable, then what we call the moral element is not present. Conceivably, then, will may argue God's existence. He may be conscious of his decisions and purposes, but, just because he is not hemmed in by time or other subjects, not feel what we know as moral compulsion. To prove that this is or is not true, we should have to analyze the whole nature and concept of will, and then see whether or not it involved the idea of good. But all this is very different from taking the existence of the moral will to prove

God's existence; it is deducing morality from a preconceived concept, that of God's will, not the induction to that concept. It is asking the question, "Is God, a God in whom we already believe, good?" not, "Must there be a God?" So we lay this alternative aside.

What, then, we are rightly asked, will become of the important problem? It might seem that a negative answer has been implied, and morality declared to have no sure hold on reality; that it is subordinate to physical reality. This is by no means a necessary conclusion. The problem, however, must be restated. It is not now a question of proving God's existence, but of defining the extent and relations of the moral will in man. To indicate the status of the question, a short consideration of it in closing will make the whole argument clearer. The solution to the more limited problem may be sought in either of two ways, the subjective or the objective. On the subjective side we have the deduction, already referred to, from the general nature of man's conscious will. This requires the proof or acceptance of the position that the will is a true revealer of essential being. With this, or instead of it, there is possible an objective argument of the moral quality of the universe. Since the question is no longer one of infinite existence, but only of the world as it appears to us, such an objective study has its proper place. There are, then, these two lines of approach,—the study of what the will involves and the account of what the world offers to the will.

Taking the last first, the primary question is, How do the laws or theories of organic evolution square with a moral interpretation of the universe? This is not the same as the demand for an evolutionary theory of ethics, for that is concerned only with the world after man appears: there is still the larger problem, Is man's morality the expression of the laws which evolved him, or is it a chance variation? In either case, is it useful to him outside the bounds of society? Within society there can be little question. Man must be moral, if he is to live in contact with his fellows. So much hardly needs argument. Yet if the only usefulness of moral action is to build up the racial life, then many things, such as self-perfection, which we now value, drop out

of sight, and the only things that count are the exterior virtues of courtesy, mutual forbearance, and honesty, with the virtues necessary to keep up the family. For many men this is all that there is of morality. The Christian virtues, if we may call them so, of otherworldliness, of devotion to a good not expressible in material terms, have no place in such a system, as they have no place in the lives of a majority of the people even of Christian lands. If a man is to believe that he may be called upon to sacrifice his life to the good of the pursuit of truth, which may, if the truth is unpopular, make him an outcast, he needs something more than the assurance that such acts help his life among men. He knows that they do not, and gets his impetus from the conviction that even the social life is not the highest, but that the universe requires a man to devote himself to truth. His morality requires the assurance that in some way the universe is moral enough to respond to his performance of duty. This assurance remains a mere trust, more or less blind, unless the working of the world of existence can be shown to point at least to this result. Certainly this has not been done. In fact we find many of our leading teachers of ethics admitting that there seems in the sacrifice of life, even for the best cause, something irrational and unnatural. If it is so, then such self-sacrifice, instead of being exalted, should be decried. It is no wonder that, with this view, many find no place for a theory of vicarious atonement. If God is righteous in the Christian sense, and the sacrifice on the Cross not an unavailing protest against a non-moral universe, the world must have a place for vicarious sacrifice and the problem must be faced, "Do the laws of nature tend to this end?" Our negative answer to the argument for God's existence does not yield a positive answer to the problem one way or the other. To really enter on its solution may disarrange some theories in both the biologic and the religious world: in the biologic, for it is certain that biologists have as yet given no place to morality, even in man, except in the modified social sense; and in religion, for to both the old orthodoxy and modern liberalism, religious ethics are non-natural. Both agree that the atonement is opposed to nature. Not to assume its naturalness and try to prove God's existence from it, but to prove this assumption, is the task set before modern religious thought.

What we have been saying of the question of God's righteousness may be summed up by saying that the concept of goodness should not be separated from the idea of personality. Returning to the second alternative as to the nature of will, we see that only in connection with a conscious will, which is essential to personality, can goodness reveal reality. The question, therefore, whether goodness is inherent in reality can only be finally answered from the standpoint of will. The line of attack of which we spoke in the last paragraph may connect with the biological theories, but it cannot prove reality. It is needless to say that such an inquiry into the nature of will is necessary to support modern theological claims. As we have seen, goodness cannot be proved by itself to be in God's nature; if it is his nature at all then, it must be deduced from it. The problem is also necessary to ethics. Those who consciously or unconsciously pin their whole faith to induction will oppose this, but there is some consolation for them in the fact that we are really only taking the last half of a circuit. One of the elements in will is the ability to judge and to act according to moral standards. This is the inductive part of the process. When we have gone thus far, we then have to ask the relation of this element to the others, and this can only be by deduction. While we insist that the idea of righteousness shall take account of the active will, we also insist that the will take account of morality. Yet even this, it may be said, is not the main point, but by so relating this concept to the whole idea of personality we make the proof of God's existence depend on one line of argument alone. It is not that this weakens the proof, but that it forces us by the terms of the problem to monism, and this is at least settling the question beforehand. In the first place we must note that if the presence of will in the world proves the existence of God, it can only be because will is of the true nature of being. In such a line of argument, if we are to come to Christian theism at all, monism is either assumed or proved. Much of the modern discontent in theology is due to a forgetfulness of this. Many hope to prove a God who exists in a pluralistic or at least not completely unified world. If God's existence is so limited by other existences, all that we mean by "God" is the highest expression of humanity taken as a whole. This

is not historical Christian theism, but it may be possible, and it rests with the students of philosophy to consider the question. This possibility must be kept in mind; the problem is necessary to any attempted solution of the nature of goodness, and upon the answer to it depends our answer as to the place of morality in existence. If God is not omnipotent, if good is not efficient outside a limited human area, then our ethics must acknowledge this, and take the natural laws as not interpretable in ethical terms; if God is the Absolute, then ethics has the right to claim the moral life to be the true being, and inherent in the self-existent. We may rest content in this discussion if we have shown that the moral argument for God's existence is secondary, but necessary to determine the rightful place of ethics. It is really the question, "Is God good?" which comes after the question, which must be answered on other grounds, "Does he exist?" In this more limited task we may hope that the "moral argument" will find its true place. The usual solution is no real answer to the problem as we stated it in the beginning, whether or not physical nature gives a place to morality.